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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1096  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5302  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 8086  
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA 0321  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4043  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0176  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2050  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 4559  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 006161

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS AND DRL, NSC FOR PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2032

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: (S/NF) SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: SURAYUD TALKS TO THE  
BRN-C

REF: A. BANGKOK 03846 (UPDATE ON JUNE PEACE TALKS)  
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 00938 (DIALOGUE MOVES FORWARD)  
[1](#)C. BANGKOK 04083 (FIRST RTG MEETING WITH PULO)

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Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce. Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: During my December 13 farewell call on Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont, Surayud described a recent meeting he had with leaders of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional Coordinate, in Bahrain. According to Surayud, the separatist leaders expressed their willingness to discuss dropping their demands for separation from the Thai state. We believe this is the first time leaders of this separatist group, which many analysts believe is the most significant insurgent group currently active in southern Thailand, have met face-to-face with Thai government officials. Given the high level nature of the meeting, this could be an important step forward in ending the southern violence. EndSummary.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) During my farewell call on Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont, December 13, the Prime Minister made passing reference to a recent meeting he had with the leaders of a Thai separatist group. In a separate four-eyes meeting that followed, I asked Surayud about his comment regarding such discussions. Surayud said that under the cover of an official visit to Bahrain earlier in the month, he attended a meeting, brokered by the Henri Dunant Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (HDC), with leaders of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional Coordinate (BRN-C). When he arrived at the meeting, four BRN-C leaders were waiting. According to Surayud the meeting was cold, initially. Upon arriving, he greeted the separatist leaders with the traditional Islamic greeting, "salaam al-akum", to which he received no reply. Commencing the dialogue, he informed the leaders that he intended to conduct the meeting in Thai, because he was Thai, and they were welcome to use a translator if they believed it was necessary. Surayud used the meeting to assure the separatists of the sincerity of his government in seeking a negotiated end to the conflict. He told them the RTG was willing to talk about anything except separation from the Thai state. In response, Surayud said, the separatists told

him they were willing to discuss dropping their demand for separation. (Note: HDC is a Geneva based NGO that has been working to facilitate talks between the RTG and representatives of separatist groups believed to be involved in the violence in southern Thailand. Please strictly protect information regarding these very sensitive discussions. End note.)

13. (S/NF) Surayud said that as the meeting wound down there was brief discussion of Malaysia's role in ending the conflict. The separatist leaders said they were leery of Malaysian involvement and did not trust the intentions of the Malaysian government. Surayud told them that they should reconsider that view since Malaysia could play a helpful role in resolving the violence. (Note: According to an HDC representative, the Malaysian External Intelligence Organization had been extremely disruptive during past attempts at negotiation in Malaysia. See reftel A. End Note.) Surayud said the end of the meeting was much warmer than the start, with both sides this time exchanging "salaams" and both sides expressing a desire for a future meeting after the Thai election December 23.

14. (S/NF) Comment: Surayud believes this meeting was an important confidence building step in establishing a way out of the morass of southern violence. He has no intention of making any public announcements regarding these meetings and appears to be keeping Thai officials involved to a bare minimum. (Although we know Thai Foreign Minister Nitaya Pibulsonggram traveled to Bahrain with the Prime Minister, it is not clear if he sat in on the meeting.) We have no independent confirmation the individuals Surayud was talking to in Bahrain are the actual leaders of the BRN-C, but are confident Surayud would not have made the trip to Bahrain without some assurance he was talking to decision makers within the organization. Surayud's decision to meet with the

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BRN-C at a time of impending political change for the Thai government lays down a marker for the new government to follow.  
BOYCE